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A

NEW FRIEND

[Hon. Frederick HERVEY]
2de Ed

ON AN

OLD SUBJECT.

On the French Revolution
& against Paine, Leveller

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A

NEW FRIEND, &c.

WHEN a great nation undergoes a revolution not only in government but in opinion and diſpoſition, the eyes of every thinking man are naturally turned towards it to watch the effects of ſo important an event. —Amongſt the various obſervers of the great and ſudden ſubverſion of a monarchy which had ſubſiſted for ages, who have communicated their ſentiments to the public, none ſeem to be ſo much attended to as Mr. Burke and Mr. Payne.—Both have written very much at large on a very intereſting ſubject, and as they have interwoven their opinions on the Britiſh conſtitution with their reflections on the late tranſactions in France,

they deſerve all the attention we can give them.

Though Mr. Burke's firſt book is written with conſiderable aſperity, I think that Mr. Payne's has a much more ſerious blot, a want of candor.—He ſets out by not only miſrepreſenting the arguments of his antagoniſt, but even by a falſe quotation of his words.—He * ſtates, that Mr. Burke cannot be a rational man, or a friend to mankind, (rather a ſevere charge) becauſe in his publication on the affairs of France there is this paſſage: "Ten years ago I could have felicitated "France on her having a government, with-"out enquiring what that government was, "or how it was adminiſtered." The public will be a little ſurprized at being informed that in Mr. Burke's book no ſuch paſſage exiſts, and probably Mr. Payne never expected the real one to be confronted with it. —Here it is †,—"Abſtractedly ſpeaking, "government as well as liberty is good—"yet could I in common ſenſe ten years ago

* Rights of Man, p. 23.

† Mr. Burke's firſt Pamphlet, 5th edition, p. 8.

" have felicitated France on her enjoyment " of a government (for ſhe then had a go- " vernment) without enquiring what that " government was, and how it was admi- " niſtered—can I now congratulate the ſame " nation upon its freedom ?"—The reader will make his own comment.—My object is only to clear Mr. Burke from the imputation of having delivered an opinion ſo little to his credit; for to felicitate a nation groaning under an arbitrary government, carried on by corrupt miniſters, would indicate not only a weak underſtanding, but a depraved one.—Thoſe who are acquainted with Mr. Burke, know him to be incapable of offering ſuch inſulting congratulations; but thoſe who live in habits of friendſhip with him muſt feel indignant at Mr. Payne's aſcribing to him ſuch a love of power as to rejoice at its exiſtence, in whatever hands it is placed. Such a paſſion cannot exiſt in the breaſt of a man ſo profeſſed an advocate for the limitation and modification of all power—in a man as averſe to an uncontrouled democracy as to an unlimited monarchy; hereafter he will not require to be reſcued from the imputation of this forged ſentence; and when the guſt of

party faction no longer purſues and irritates him, his character will appear unſhaded by the frailties which neceſſarily obſcure the imperfect luſtre of human virtue. Poſterity will know him only by the great and leading features of his life—in religious matters, firm in his perſuaſions, ſteady in his obedience, exalted in his hopes—in his political conduct, zealous and ſincere, and not ſo much a partizan of any faction as a ſupporter of that well-regulated and balanced power which he has ever thought ſo eſſential to the welfare of his country—in domeſtic life, mild and amiable in the extreme—in friendſhip, cordial and unfluctuating.

I confeſs myſelf, that the firſt idea of millions of people gaining their liberty, and throwing off the yoke of deſpotiſm, gave me a mixt ſenſation of exultation and joy, that afforded me the greateſt happineſs. But when I ſaw their king a priſoner, and the mob ſo often the directors of their counſels, and ſo conſtantly the judges of their criminals, there was a total revolution in my feelings. The deſtruction of the nobility, and the confiſcation of the church eſtates, ſerved to in-

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creaſe my miſtruſt of theſe new legiſlators. The firſt was a meaſure adopted merely to ingratiate themſelves with the loweſt order of the people. The ſecond was a raſh and impolitic remedy againſt public bankruptcy; to increaſe national credit they increaſed national property, but by the means they took of doing ſo, they have ſhaken the whole fabrick of property to its foundation. God knows how long it may ſurvive the ſhock. Hitherto we have only ſeen the fore-runners of ruin, increaſing diſcontent, increaſing emigration, increaſing poverty; tribunals overturned, magiſtrates deſpiſed, and juſtice herſelf obliged to yield to the wild and cruel dictates of a ferocious populace. Oh! France, how ſtrangely you have counteracted the acquiſition of your liberty, and how deeply you have ſtained it with the exerciſe of that very tyranny which you boaſt of having ſubdued. The oath you require of your citizens is a direct renunciation of the oath of allegiance to the old government, which was either actually taken, or tacitly complied with, by the whole nation. Is it on perjury that you expect to build honor, fidelity and obedience? and yet you puniſh thoſe who refuſe to take it.—

it.—This is tyranny. The appropriation of the church eſtates was neither in conſequence of the conſent of the clergy, nor their crimes. —This is tyranny. The ſentence of degradation paſſed on your nobility, was wholly undeſerved by them—This is tyranny. The impriſonment and treatment of your king is not only contrary to law, but revolting to humanity—This is tyranny. If, alas! the power you have torn from the crown had fallen into hands that it had not corrupted; if the dignity of which you have ſtripped your ariſtocracy could have reverted into the hands of the people at large, given them worthier notions of the uſe of liberty, raiſed them in their own eſtimation, and infuſed a portion of nobility even into the loweſt orders of your ſociety; if the confiſcation of the church eſtates had only ſerved to repreſs the luxury of your clergy without infringing on their independence, if it had not introduced a ſet of penſioned prieſts, the mercenary and impious advocates of a legiſlature that were transferring the decorations of the altar to the tomb of Voltaire, and waſting the ſacred ſpoils of religion in ſacrilegious tributes to impiety and atheiſm; if there never

never had been required an oath of fidelity to theſe inſulters of that omnipotent Being, in whoſe name and preſence it is taken, your revolution might then indeed have been what its advocates in this country have called it, one of the greateſt glories of the world! But how will the hearts of your children bleed to receive their liberty (if you are able to tranſmit it to them) ſtained with ingratitude, barbarity, and ſacrilege. On the day on which your ſtates-general met, all this might have been avoided. You were poſſeſſed of a legal mode of reformation. You had nobles willing to relinquiſh their invidious privileges, and clergy ready to aſſiſt the finances of their country, and a king (with a diſintereſtedneſs that has been but ill rewarded) in the very act of circumſcribing his authority for the happineſs of his people.

I know not by what refined ſophiſtry your leaders prevailed upon you, under ſuch circumſtances, to prefer a revolution to a reform. In vain does Mr. Payne attempt to impreſs upon mankind, that rebelling againſt ſo mild and beneficent a monarch, conſtitutes one of the principal merits of your proceedings;

ings; becauſe, ſays he, it proves that the revolt was againſt the crown and not againſt the perſon who wears it. But when the delirium of your revolution is over; when you are reſtored to the ſober feelings of our compaſſionate nature, and diſcover that perſons, as well as things, have places in our affections, and claims to our fidelity; you will bluſh at the memory of your injured monarch; you will grieve at having ſtript unaſſuming royalty of all its harmleſs decorations, and neceſſary prerogatives; and almoſt prefer that dark and ignorant age, when power was imprudently laviſhed on your oppreſſors, to this enlightened era in which you have wreſted it with inſult from your benefactor.

But this new doctrine of eſtimating the merits of a revolt by the virtues of the depoſed or impriſoned monarch, is not diſcordant from the feelings only, and though ſanctioned by the authority of Mr. Payne, the French will have more important reaſons for regretting its adoption. Their extorted conceſſions of the miſerable remnants of the prerogatives of an indulgent and acquieſcing king, were as impolitic as ungenerous. Whilſt

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we continue to cheriſh feelings of gratitude, affection and honor, it is dangerous in the extreme to irritate and offend them; and it is as bad a policy (and perhaps a worſe) to adopt a meaſure that revolts the heart, as one which is not ſanctioned by the underſtanding.

Hiſtory informs us, that when the elder Brutus liberated the Romans from the deſpotiſm of the wicked and profligate Tarquin, their lawful monarch, his vices had prepared the way to a revolution, by alienating the affections of his ſubjects: but if we turn to a later period, we ſhall ſee the glorious endeavours of the ſecond Brutus, to free his country from the yoke of a uſurper, wholly fruſtrated by the good and amiable qualities of the individual who had enſlaved it. Far am I from ſaying, that a mild reign ought, at all events, to be ſubmitted to. It may often be an excellent opportunity for undertaking a reform, but it muſt always be an ill-judged one for effecting a revolution.

Had the French aimed at annihilating their monarchy under the weak and diſſipated reign

of Louis the XVth; had they attempted to force the crown from his haughty and imperious predeceſſor, the opinions of mankind might have varied on the expediency of the meaſure, but the hearts of poſterity would have forgiven them. Poſſibly Louis the XIVth might have revenged his cauſe, and cruſhed the outrage in its infancy. But the preſent King has neither the inclination nor the means. His ſubjects may evade puniſhment, but they cannot eſcape diſgrace. Hiſtory will record, to the lateſt periods, a benevolent and diſintereſted king, deprived of all authority—A liberal ariſtocracy, degraded by the people they had protected—A generous clergy ruined by thoſe they had offered to aſſiſt; and, as if the annihilation of nobility had extinguiſhed the ſentiments and principles which it repreſents, every law, both human and divine, neglected and deſpiſed — The ſtandards of religion and morality, to which ſo many had been led by conſcience, ſo many by example, almoſt totally deſerted—The flame of faction and revenge, unfanned by religious zeal or civil war, blazing with more violence than ever it had raged with in the hotteſt moments of political convulſions—The people

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in full poſſeſſion of their liberty, exerciſing upon their fellow-citizens, acts of more outrageous barbarity than ever had been offered to the moſt determined Infidels, by the moſt ſanguinary and exaſperated Bigots—Men of character condemned on the moſt trifling ſurmiſes—A magiſtrate, under the blot of ſuppoſed loyalty, murdered in the moſt cruel manner, and devoured by the bloody * populace — Another citizen leſs mercifully † roaſted before he was diſpatched—‡ Mothers obliged to be the ſpectators of their children's blood, and even of their agony—And women publicly devouring the raw entrails of a human § victim.

Poſterity will hardly believe, that individuals could have been found for the principal actors in ſcenes like theſe. But the inhabitants of Paris, Rouen, and Lyons, were

* Lyons, Auguſt, 1791. † Lyons, Auguſt, 1791.

‡ At Paris it was frequent for the people to carry the victims of their rage, and preſent their mangled corpſes to their neareſt relations. At Lyons, when they roaſted a man alive, they obliged his mother to be preſent, and afterwards beat her to death.

§ Rouen, 1790.

the witneſſes and the ſpectators. What alas! could the nation expect, when it not only ſhook off the reſtraint of power, but the awe of religion. It could draw no conciliating balm from a clergy it had debaſed. It could find no reſource in the impoſing reſpectability of a legiſlature, which had Mirabeau for its leader, and Voltaire for its idol.

But theſe new advocates for the rights of men, with hearts too cold to be animated by a reform, and imaginations too heated to regulate a revolution, have neither principles nor conduct adapted to their ſituation. Inſtead of cheriſhing religion as the grand baſis on which all human good muſt reſt, they pay the moſt public honors to the moſt conſpicuous Infidels that their country ever produced—Inſtead of leading their clergy from luxury to competence, and from competence to virtue and reſpect, they lower them from wealth to indigence, and from indigence to contempt — Inſtead of guarding againſt all infringement on property, both by precautions and example, they are themſelves the firſt great violaters of its laws—Inſtead of build-

building a government on principles of duty, they make it the mere creature of inclination, and their king is to ſubmit to it, or to be dethroned, as if no former compact had exiſted. As the repreſentatives of the French nation, they think themſelves an arbitrary body, independent of all laws, and ſubject to no controul. But this is a fatal error. They forget that even the ſovereignty of the people, like all other mortal power, is only a delegated authority intruſted to us by that Supreme Being, who attentively watches over the uſe we make of it—That whether reſiding in a body as the people, or in an individual as the King, it is equally ſubject to the ſame laws of virtue, fidelity, and honor —That allegiance is as much a duty as protection; and that the ſubjects of a lawful monarch, who deſpiſing all gentler means, ſeize the rude hand of rebellion, to lop off the too exuberant branches of prerogative, let looſe a principle of perfidy and intemperance that may revert upon themſelves—That the deſpotiſm of the people, though independent of the controul that curbs the deſpotiſm of an individual, though independent of every earthly tribunal, and beyond the reach

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of human juſtice and revenge, like every other crime, creates its own puniſhment, and entails misfortune on itſelf—That laws that are enacted by violence, muſt be maintained by oppreſſion — That oppreſſion will beget diſguſt, diſſentions, and animoſity—That public wrongs will lead to private injuries—That the violent breach of national faith in ſeizing the church lands, will cheriſh violence and outrage in the heart of their country—That a nation is indeed a bankrupt, when all its moſt reſpectable citizens are exiles; and that a conſtitution acquired by the breach of public faith, allegiance, gratitude, and religion, is built on the ruins of its nobleſt ſupporters.

In England we have to boaſt of a liberty acquired upon very different principles, and by a very different conduct.—Inſtead of diſſolving ſociety, and ſpeculating on abſtract propoſitions of the rights of man, in the midſt of anarchy and confuſion, we have made, for a ſucceſſion of ages, a gradual and ſteady progreſs to the attainment of our preſent conſtitution.—Inſtead of ſubverting a whole government and adopting a new ſyſtem,

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the effects of which no human wiſdom could foreſee, we have uniformly preſerved the principle of our old laws, and adapted them as well as we could to the emergencies which have occurred.—In purſuit of freedom we have not madly overturned every barrier of gratitude, allegiance, and religion that obſtructed our progreſs towards it; we have ſtopped, with veneration, at obſtacles that were to be the guardians of our future liberty.—Before we have reſolved on meaſures for its attainment, we have endeavoured to underſtand the principles of that glorious bleſſing.—We have never underſtood by liberty the right of the Many to oppreſs the Few, the power of inſulting our nobles, or the pleaſure of decorating our monarchs with the badge of rebellion.—We have never underſtood by liberty the power of changing, at pleaſure, all our laws and cuſtoms, the power of annulling the moſt ancient of our inſtitutions, or the power of levelling the moſt reſpectable claſſes of our citizens; and we have never attempted to relieve our finances by the ruin of any order in our ſociety.—We think, on the contrary, that liberty, to be either permanent, or beneficial,

muſt be eſtabliſhed on very different maxims. When, therefore, we have to amend our laws or modify any of the exiſting prerogatives or privileges, we do not follow the wild flight of popular opinion, but the ſteady courſe of judgement, founded on experience, and regulated by duty. A momentary frenzy againſt our hereditary nobility, the great bulwark againſt all infringements of our rights, would not induce our legiſlature to annul them; and in cool blood we ſhould condemn them if they did. We hold it to be their duty to diſregard the tranſient caprices of the people, and to diſcharge the weighty truſt repoſed in them with ſteadineſs and fidelity—As the ſacred depoſit of national authority we wiſh them to aſſume and to embody all our virtues, and to diſcard and reprobate all our failings; and we would have them in their public proceedings, as juſt, lenient, merciful, faithful, upright, and religious as the moſt virtuous of thoſe who are to profit by their conduct and example. Under ſuch circumſtances we hope, both from experience and ſpeculation, long to enjoy a rational and well-regulated liberty: With life and property fundamentally ſecured—arbitrary impriſon-

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ment effectually prevented—laws excellent in themſelves, and wiſely ſubject to a conſtitutional mode of amendment—with juſtice impartially adminiſtered — condemnation pronounced with tenderneſs, and even capable of mitigation—with ſubordination preſerved without ſervitude—allegiance, duty, and reſpect flouriſhing without the ſpirit of ſlavery or its vices—with a firm and manly ſubmiſſion to the divine will, and a due ſenſe of the happineſs beſtowed upon us—with a ſpirit of toleration, charity and indulgence, and a conſtant remembrance that as the firſt duty of a citizen is allegiance to his country, ſo the firſt duty of the country is protecting every individual that belongs to it.

I know there are perſons in this kingdom who profeſs opinions very different from theſe; and I am grieved at it, not becauſe I fear their cabals, but becauſe I could wiſh that in a virtuous and well-regulated ſociety, like ours, all its members ſhould be happy and contented. I cannot, however, help feeling ſome reſentment towards thoſe few individuals who have ſo induſtriouſly endeavoured to diſturb our peace by the circulation of

Mr. Payne's book, and the propagation of the principles contained in it. Mr. Payne's book is perhaps one of the moſt dangerous publications that ever appeared on any ſubject ;—calculated to ſeduce the weak and encourage the diſaffected, and written expreſsly to deſtroy every exiſting ſentiment of duty, affection and reſpect ;—it offers us nothing to ſupply their place that can ſecure tranquillity and order, on any permanent foundation. When he complains of the grievances under which he ſuppoſes this country to labour, he does not point them out with the candor of a man really anxious for our welfare, but with the ingenuity of one bent upon making us diſcontented. Moſt of the evils he enumeratesare trifling or imaginary:—he laments, for inſtance, that the law ſuppoſes our King never to die, and that it makes him perſonally incapable of doing wrong—he laments that our houſe of peers is independent of the people, and, by a new ſyſtem of juſtice, would have the body to which the commons appeal for judgment on the criminals they impeach, the creatures of the accuſers —he laments that our county members repreſent counties ſo unequal in their ſize ; that York-

Yorkſhire is ſo much larger than Bedfordſhire, and that we groan under the deſpotiſm of the appellation of Sovereign Lord the King. He would rather, I ſuppoſe, recommend it to us to divide our kingdom into ſquare republics—to degrade our nobles who procured us Magna-Charta—to ruin our clergy that we ought to flock to for conſolation, and to renounce our allegiance to a Monarch who deſerves every thing from his ſubjects. According to his doctrine, indeed, of making the virtues and benevolence of a King the ſignal for revolt, there never was a reign better calculated for rebellion. But ideal grievances and ſpeculative remedies are neither the offſpring of a ſound judgment or a virtuous diſpoſition.—The former are calculated to make men diſcontented, whilſt the latter are inadequate to make them happy.

In England and in Ireland the great body of the people are ſenſible of this, and we have ever ſhewn it by our conduct. We are cautious of exploding ſyſtems which have ſtood the teſt of ages, and conſider the gradual courſe of progreſſive amendment as the only one by which we can approach perfection.

We know that desperate remedies against political evils, like violent restoratives in the diseases of nature, though they may answer for the moment, deaden the patient to milder remedies, and make that violence continually necessary which should only be resorted to in the last emergency. We are well aware, that political violence generates the evils of the principle by which it acts, and that in a large country its influence would be dangerous and forcible. Being possessed then of an independent representation, a respectable aristocracy, a mild and limited monarchy, and an indulgent and consoling religion, all our views and wishes tend only to the improvement or modification of these elementary principles which we cherish and revere. In England the people have uniformly endeavoured to maintain them, and even during the short interval between the reigns of the two Charles's, it was the name, and not the power of the crown, which was suspended. A striking lesson; and may we ever remember having incurred the horrors of Rebellion to rid us of a name, and transfer the power that belonged to it, to hands that used it with double rigour. The people of Ireland

land have ſhewn fully as decided a predilection for their conſtitution. In the laſt century they endured every ſpecies of hardſhip to ſecure themſelves a proteſtant line of ſucceſſion. In later days, they uſed every endeavour to render their two houſes of parliament independent; and their laſt ſtruggles were not to annul either, but to regenerate, by a reform, the principles of repreſentation. Though they did not ſucceed to the extent of their wiſhes, they did not proceed to violence; but with a patience, moderation, and ſagacity, that will tranſmit honor with their memory to the remoteſt branches of poſterity, they waited for a more favorable opportunity, well knowing that improvements which we mean to be permanent, muſt be effected by time and diſcretion, and that advantages which are gained by one revolution may be loſt by another.

In theſe countries (for all human works are daſhed with imperfection) the very nature of our ſyſtem warns us, in ſome meaſure, of the miſeries of anarchy. The periodical reverſion of the power of the houſe of commons into the hands of the people, teaches us,

us, by the cabals, intrigues, factions, animosities and vengeance, often produced by contested elections, the horrors we might expect from a total dissolution of government. If, therefore, we were not attached to our constitution from long experience, and from never having heard of one under which people live so quietly and happily, Mr. Payne would, on this account, find it difficult to make converts of us—but as it is, by preaching such doctrines he only confirms us in our aversion to them; and it is somewhat singular that the inhabitants of that very town *, which he states in his book to be most disaffected to our government, and most inclined to receive his principles, and even to fly to France to enjoy them, should have gone such violent lengths to discountenance such of their fellow-citizens as had adopted them. But the people of England, though often misled for a time, are naturally loyal and generous, and will never embrace tenets void of duty and humanity;—and those who have wished to attach them to their interests, have always been obliged to engage their af-

* Birmingham.

fections by ſome appearance of virtue, or to excite their compaſſion by ſome pretence of misfortune.

Mr. Payne endeavours to puzzle us with a long liſt of evils, but his reaſoning is ſophiſtical and ſuperficial. In his attack on the hereditary nobility in England and Ireland, he complains that any diſtinction ſhould prevail, but what is founded upon ſuperior merit. According to that idea the ſucceſſion of the kings of the French would be interrupted, whenever the heir to the crown had more than a common ſhare of the imperfections of our nature. In that perfect ſtate in which we are to exiſt hereafter, I feel confident that virtue will be the only title to an exalted ſtation. But becauſe in this frail world the heart and morals of men do not invariably correſpond to their ſituations, are we to diſclaim the whole ſyſtem of ſubordination? The crown of England has deſcended to very vicious and depraved princes, but we have contented ourſelves with providing againſt the effects of their crimes; and though amongſt our nobility there have been very profligate and worthleſs individuals, yet, as

a branch of the legiſlature, they have ever merited our affection and reſpect. The hereditary ſucceſſion to the rank and privileges of peerage is with us neither an object of oppreſſion nor envy, and we glory in having a body of men, the great tribunal before which all our ſtate criminals appear, the ultimate appeal in all conteſted property, the great guard againſt the encroachments of the crown, the hereditary counſellors of the King, educated with care and liberality, brought up in the ſtudy of treaties, politics, and hiſtory, and impreſſed from their earlieſt infancy with worthy notions of the importance of their duty—the great ſtakes they poſſeſs in the country we rejoice at, as additional ties on their conduct, and as the greateſt poſſible bond of fidelity we have enacted, that nothing but treaſon to their country ſhall prevent them tranſmitting their honors to their children.

But the deſtruction of hereditary honors, which Mr. Payne ſo eagerly contends for, would lead to the ſubverſion of every ſpecies of inheritance. Wealth is not more ſtrictly property than rank, and it is only hereditary upon

upon the ſame principles—They are both the creatures of ſociety, and there is no reaſon why the reward of public ſervices ſhould not, at leaſt, have an equal claim to its protection with the fruits of induſtry in private life. It is eaſy to ſee why revolutioniſts are the bitter enemies of the laws of ſucceſſion. All thoſe diſtinctions and eſtates which would be no longer hereditary, as they would be unoccupied at the death of the preſent poſſeſſors, would greatly increaſe the patronage of the reigning power. Thoſe to whom the government of the country was committed, would have perpetual opportunities of gaining new partizans by new favors, and would maintain their ſituations by a ſeries of bribery and corruption. But this policy, however well adapted to the preſent neceſſity of the caſe, would in the end be found the ruin of the ſtate. Hereditary honors involve in them perhaps a deeper and more complicated wiſdom than we are aware of. The aged members of ſociety, from whom alone we can expect the mild and prudent dictates of experience and diſcretion, being no longer able to tranſmit the rewards of their good offices to children that they love, would loſe the chief

ſtimulus to their exertions—they would feel too far advanced in life to venture, for perſonal profit, into the buſy ſcene of politics, and would prefer devoting the remainder of their days to tranquillity, when their honors could no longer ſurvive them. The paths of power would by this means be laid open to inexperienced adventurers; the councils of the nation would partake of the intemperance of youth; and its leaders having no *permanent* intereſt in its welfare, would propoſe and undertake every ſucceſſive change that human fickleneſs could invent for their preſent intereſt and aggrandiſement.

Virtuous citizens will ever wiſh to extend their advantages beyond themſelves, and when fathers can no longer benefit the beings they have called into exiſtence, they will have reaſonable grounds for diſcontent.—The induſtrious expect to bequeath to their children, the produce of their labor, realized in wealth—The brave and intelligent expect to leave their poſterity the ſplendor of their public ſervices, embodied in rank and honors. —A country that prohibits ſuch a legacy, deſtroys one of the chief ſources of its greatneſs,

neſs, and blaſts the vital principle of public virtue.

But Mr. Payne and his faction have neceſſitated themſelves to diſclaim hereditary ſucceſſion, by the firſt principles of their political ſyſtem.—His maxim, that no one generation can bind another, precludes effectually all hereditary deſcent.—Giddy, diſcomforting opinion, and fit only for that wretched banditti of revolutioniſts, who are ever greedy of political hurricanes, that they may live on the wrecks of ruined ſtates.—Happily for us, the experienced wiſdom of more virtuous politicians, has formed a plan which promiſes leſs fluctuating poſſeſſions, and more permanent happineſs.—As in regulating our public proceedings, we wiſh to lay aſide the frailties of our diſpoſition, ſo in framing the conſtitution of our country, we endeavour to remedy the defects of our nature.—We conſider ourſelves therefore in our collective capacity, as already in poſſeſſion of that immortality of which we are individually to partake hereafter.—We think that the nation, as one whole, always complete, though always changing, is perfectly capable of making a laſting compact—

That the hourly influx of new citizens derive their claim to its protection, from their adoption of its laws and cuſtoms; and if from any change in the natural or moral world, our conſtitution ſhould abſolutely require to be new modelled, we think that the generation who made the compact of government, would have had juſt the ſame plea for breaking it as the remoteſt of their poſterity, —that that plea would be neceſſity, and neceſſity alone;—and we humbly hope, that if ever ſuch a calamity ſhould occur, we ſhall have leaders poſſeſſed of ſufficient influence and integrity, to conduct us with temperance and diſcretion.

It has been aſſerted by Dr. Price, and maintained by Mr. Payne, that the Engliſh nation acquired at the revolution three new rights—to chooſe their governors, to caſhier them for miſconduct, and to frame a government for themſelves.—The firſt and laſt of theſe ſuppoſed acquiſitions, may however be diſcuſſed under one head, for if they have not acquired a right to elect their governors, they certainly cannot have a right to frame a government for themſelves.

Reſpect-

Reſpecting the firſt of theſe rights, the election of our own governors, ſurprized as I was at Mr. Payne's publiſhing ſo extraordinary an aſſertion, I was ſtill more ſo at his attempting to ground it on the ſpirit of a meaſure, which expreſsly diſclaims and provides againſt the exerciſe of the very right he pretends to derive from it. It is needleſs for me to quote from the public acts of that day, which have been ſo lately called to every body's remembrance. Nothing can be ſtronger worded than the bills which acknowledge and confirm the Proteſtant ſucceſſion. But even before theſe bills were paſſed, there were not two opinions on the ſubject. In the various conferences upon the propriety of the expreſſions, "abdication of King James," and "vacancy of the throne," the opinions of both houſes appear marked and evident. Lord Nottingham, on the part of the Lords, tells the Commons, "that though the Lords have "agreed that the King had deſerted the government, and therefore have made application to the Prince of Orange, to take "upon him the adminiſtration of the "government, thereby to provide for the "peace

" peace and ſafety of the kingdom, yet there " can be no inference drawn from thence, " but only that the exerciſe of the govern- " ment by King James the IId. is ceaſed ſo " as the Lords were and are willing to ſe- " cure the nation againſt the return of the " ſaid King into this kingdom, but not that " there was ſuch an abdication by him, or " ſuch a vacancy in the throne, that the " crown was thereby become elective, which " they cannot agree." The Commons, in return, anſwered, " That there was a pre- " ſent defect of one to exerciſe the admini- " ſtration of government, and that they con- " ceived the declaring a vacancy, and pro- " viding for the ſupply of it, could never " make the crown elective." And in ano- ther conference they told the Lords, " that " the conſtitution, notwithſtanding the va- " cancy, was ſtill the ſame, and that making " the kingdom elective, was neither meant " by the Commons, nor could be deduced " from their words."

From theſe extracts it is ſufficiently evi- dent, that the leading patriots of the day, conſidered the hereditary ſucceſſion to the crown,

crown, as an inviolable law, and as the ſhort deviation from it, that their deſperate ſituation compelled them to was carefully * limited to the emergency that produced it, it could neither be intended nor conſidered as a precedent.

The other notion, that we have gained by the revolution a right of caſhiering our governors for miſconduct, is full as groundleſs and abſurd; beſides, the known and wiſe policy of this country, which transfers reſponſibility from the crown to its miniſters, the revolution parliament cannot be conſidered as the puniſhers of King James, but by the groſſeſt miſapprehenſion of their conduct. King James was not diſmiſſed by the parliament; nor was he ſuperſeded on account of any incapacity to govern, but becauſe he had abdicated the throne, and that the throne was thereby vacant. The nation's appointing ſome one to fill up the vacancy, was not to revenge themſelves on King James, nor was it intended as a puniſhment

* As appears by Queen Anne's iſſue being preferred in the ſucceſſion to King William's.

for

for his offences. The throne was vacant—It was dangerous it ſhould remain ſo; and the meaſures adopted to remedy the evil, were not the effect of choice, but of neceſſity.

If it were poſſible for the hereditary ſucceſſion of the crown to be more fully eſtabliſhed ſince the revolution than it ſeems to have been before, the various acts paſſed both at that time and ſince, would ſtrengthen and confirm it. But here Mr. Payne makes his moſt violent attack on the conduct of the Engliſh parliament. No parliament, no ſet of men whatſoever, can, according to his tenets, bind their heirs. He therefore exclaims againſt the tyranny of the King, lords and commons of that day, in attempting to eſtabliſh the hereditary ſucceſſion of the crown, as one of the firſt principles and unalterable laws of our ſocial compact;—here however we begin to become acquainted with Mr. Payne, and can trace the ſentiment to his deſire of infecting us with the wiſh of change.—In France, where it ſerves the purpoſes of faction better, he admires an aſſembly of uſurpers, ſelf-converted into legiſlators, and juſtifies their framing a code

of

of new laws, and deciding on an hereditary monarchy, which no future aſſembly can ever alter or ſuppreſs—but the very ſame power exerted by a legal aſſembly, elected like the convention of 1688, for the expreſs purpoſe of re-eſtabliſhing our government, and ſupplying its deficiencies, he calls a right by aſſumption, which no ſet of men can ever poſſeſs.

Such flagrant contradictions cannot fail of unmaſking the propagator of ſuch oppoſite ſentiments.—The juſtifier and advocate of uſurped power, where he can feed the flame of anarchy by his encomiums—The profeſſed enemy of legal power and wiſe regulations, where he can blow up diſcontent and confuſion by attacking them—Miſerable and contemptible office, to intermeddle in the intereſts of a nation, in which he has no concern, merely to create diſaffection, and to cheriſh ſedition at the inſtigation of a rebellious country to which he does not belong. —We know that the French, dreading that their cruel and oppreſſive meaſures ſhould induce other nations to take part againſt them, have endeavoured to ſubvert every govern-

ment that is ſtrong enough to oppoſe them; and that for this purpoſe, they have ſent emiſſaries throughout Europe, to propagate the doctrines in other countries, which have deſtroyed their own.—From ſuch people, however, we have nothing to fear.—The meanneſs of their office ſhields us from the miſchief of their deſigns.—But ſhould there be a man baſe enough to aſſume the character of a friend, the better to gratify the inveteracy of a cruel enemy, our danger might be great indeed. Should ſuch a one attempt our ruin, he would enliſt with eagerneſs under Mr. Payne, and carefully purſue his line of conduct.—Like him he would affect the utmoſt concern for the perfecting our government, and inſidiouſly propoſe means that would be the bane of our tranquility.—Like him he would paſs over all thoſe ſtriking properties in our conſtitution, which ſecure our happineſs on the moſt laſting baſis that wiſdom and experience can form, with the frail materials of human nature, and dwell only on trifling evils that have ſcarce any exiſtence but in the exaggerated portrait he has made of them.—Like him he would hold out for our example, the conduct of a

country, which in purſuit of a wild and fanatic liberty, has deſtroyed all the ſentiments and principles that make it worth poſſeſſing. —By a new code of rights, he would endeavour to ſeduce us into the ſame violation of the laws of property, of which that nation has been guilty. He would endeavour to perſuade us to purſue their ſyſtem of annihilating all thoſe diſtinctions of ſociety, which give diverſity to life, and activity to virtue.— He would recommend to us to adopt their oppreſſion of a reſpectable church, which was at once the reward of piety and its organ —by an artful repreſentation of imaginary hardſhips, he would attempt to make us diſſatisfied with real benefits, and by the pretended neceſſity of regenerating our conſtitution, he would betray us into the loſs of all the bleſſings it affords us.

We are aware that the Engliſh conſtitution, like all human productions, has ſome weakneſſes and imperfections. But we do not wiſh that they ſhould be perpetually magnified and expoſed, becauſe it increaſes an evil that can never be wholly removed.— Some further regulations in the repreſentation

tion of the people, ſome trifling alteration in our laws, ſome reformation in the church, and moſt of all in the manners of our clergy, would certainly be beneficial. But theſe are objects which, as they are not eſſential to our proſperity, we look forward to obtaining by mild and temperate meaſures; and we await their completion with patience, ſenſible that the violence of the ſhock that would give us immediate poſſeſſion, might very probably introduce much worſe evils than thoſe we ſhould eradicate.

FINIS.